

EDITORIAL SECTION

TREND TOWARD MECHANIZATION OF MOSQUITO CONTROL WORK ACCELERATED BY MANPOWER SHORTAGE AND MOUNTING LABOR COSTS

As never before, the war just over has focused official and public attention upon the importance of insect carriers of disease and their control.

Of such insect borne diseases, malaria in its aggregate world-wide effects has been called the most destructive disease of man; yet not until 1898 was it discovered that malaria is transmitted by mosquitoes. Because of its intractability, and its spectacular, and fearfully destructive epidemics, yellow fever had long been one of the most dreaded of human diseases; yet not until 1901 was it shown that yellow fever also is mosquito borne.

Following these discoveries, organized mosquito control work was first attempted about the beginning of present century.

Mosquitoes develop in quiet water. Suppression of mosquito breeding, therefore, could be accomplished by the elimination of mosquito breeding water through filling or draining, by treating such mosquito breeding water with larvacide poisons, or by covering it with a film of oil.

The flight range of adult mosquitoes emerging from neighboring untreated water, however, very early made it evident that effective control of these insects and of the diseases they may carry can be accomplished only by community action, through which the control measures must be applied not only throughout the area to be protected, but also throughout a surrounding protective zone as well.

Since this may involve work on the property of many private owners, special legislation has been devised providing for the organization of mosquito abatement districts administered by local mosquito abatement commissions with power to enter private property for the purpose of doing any work that may be required. In most cases, such mosquito abatement

districts have been made co-extensive with the counties concerned, to avoid overlapping fiscal agencies.

At first, ditching was done with hand tools, and larvacides and oil were applied largely by hand; but rising labor costs, and the enormous areas of salt marsh and of upland swamp and marshland to be treated, made it imperative that mechanized equipment be substituted for hand labor wherever possible.

From the beginning, therefore, the trend has been toward mechanization; but the earlier available mechanized equipment was not well adapted to the work, and special mechanisms had to be devised, built, tested, and improved. Modern engineering equipment, however, is much better suited for use in mosquito control work, and was being rapidly adopted prior to 1929.

Now, after 15 years of depression enforced economies and of war restrictions, old equipment is largely worn out or obsolete, and general inventories are heavily depleted.

While this has been a serious handicap during recent years, it will enable mosquito abatement commissions to re-equip themselves with the most modern equipment and supplies that have been developed under the stress of war requirements.

Manpower shortages and mounting labor costs will sharply accentuate the trend toward mechanization, and mosquito control work will correspondingly be improved and made more economical.

As a special service, *Mosquito News* hopes frequently to publish descriptions of interesting mechanized equipment which may have been worked out and tested by some of our many ingenious mosquito control engineers, for the information of

co-workers who may be wrestling with similar problems.

A period of unusual activity in this field is just opening. When you are sure that you have a good idea, it may save time and money for some one else if you will promptly pass it along.

Letters to the Editor
Taken Literally

September 26, 1945.

Robert D. Glasgow
Editor, Mosquito News
The University of the State of New York
New York State Museum
Albany 1, New York

Dear Mr. Glasgow:

I offer this letter to readers of "Mosquito News", knowing that they will appreciate Lt. Gurin's keen sense of humor. I do hope that suggestions offered by readers of the "Mosquito News" will not conflict with military regulations.

Sincerely,

J. LYELL CLARKE
Sanitary Engineer

Enc. The DesPlaines Valley Mosquito Abatement
District.

JLC:ef

September 21, 1945.

Oak Leaves
100 S. Marion
Oak Park, Illinois

Dear Sirs:

I want your readers to share our appreciation of the following letter:

" Myitkyina, Burma

"The Des Plaines Valley
Mosquito Abatement District

"Dear Sirs:

"Mosquitoes *DO* annoy me!

"Lt. GURIN"

The above letter was prompted by the following ad which appeared in the August issues of **Oak Leaves**: If mosquitoes annoy you, please notify the Des Plaines Valley Mosquito Abatement District. Phone Lyons 6765. No charge will be made for the inspection of mosquito breeding places.

In response to this ad the mosquito abatement district received four complaints—three were from villages inside the district, and Lt. Gurin's Burma complaint, slightly beyond the present territorial boundaries of our district.

After mature consideration, we have arrived at the conclusion that Lt. Gurin is suffering from acute mosquito annoyance aggravated by a desire for home comforts.

A number of our employees have written Lt. Gurin reporting upon mosquito bites received (outside the district) and have requested him to send us Burma mosquitoes for our permanent collection. In order to facilitate capture and shipping of these Burmese vampires, we have sent him collection devices and packing boxes.

If readers of **Oak Leaves** wish to commiserate with him, or send him an atomic mosquito swatter, his address is as follows: Lt. Lawrence R. Gurin, 1332 AAF BN, APO 490, c/o P.M., New York, N. Y.

Sincerely,

J. LYELL CLARKE
Sanitary Engineer.

JLC:ef